

This is commonsense legislation that will enable small businesses and start-up companies to better access the capital they need to expand and create jobs.

My provision has a lot of support from American job creators around the country. The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council called it "a long overdue solution that will widen the pool of potential funders for entrepreneurs . . . to seek and secure the capital they need to compete and grow. . . . Our economy will improve once entrepreneurs are provided the tools, opportunities and incentives they need to hire and invest."

There are 175 Democrats in the House of Representatives who have supported this bill as a stand-alone bill. It has been endorsed by the SEC's Advisory Committee on Small and Emerging Companies. When it was included in the broader JOBS bill in the House, it passed, as I said, by a vote of 390 to 23. If job growth is our priority here in the Senate, we should not delay on moving forward with this important job-creating legislation.

I thank my colleague from Kansas for joining me on the floor today to talk about the need to pass this JOBS Act and get it on the President's desk, as he said he wanted in his State of the Union Address back in January. It represents exactly what we should be doing here in Washington; that is, creating a stable and productive economic environment by easing regulatory burdens and unleashing economic potential without adding to the national debt.

The Senator from Kansas very ably addressed in his remarks earlier the importance of getting spending and debt under control, because that does also create conditions that are favorable to small businesses to invest. If there is uncertainty out there about what the Federal Government is going to be doing in terms of borrowing and spending, it creates a cloud under which it is very difficult for job creators to create jobs.

I hope that my colleagues here in the Senate will support this important piece of legislation and ensure job creators across the country have access to the capital they need to hire and invest and that we will start taking steps to address the impediments, the barriers, the obstacles that are in place right now to the development of domestic energy production that will ease the price at the pump and make it more affordable for small businesses to invest in this country.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, just to conclude, I would like to thank and commend the Senator from South Dakota for his leadership on these issues and again express my pleasure that we are finally taking up legislation that will make it easier for new businesses to raise capital, creating a phase-in period for small, growing companies to comply with government regulations that will help young businesses expand

and could ease the decision to go public, and, finally, to update our securities laws that have been in place since the 1930s to reflect a 21st-century marketplace so they can expand access to capital for entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. And all this is done with the goal of creating the circumstance where many will succeed.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware is recognized.

Mr. COONS. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. COONS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2194 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. COONS. I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN of Ohio). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### JUMPSTART OUR BUSINESS STARTUPS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 3606, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3606) to increase American job creation and economic growth by improving access to the public capital markets for emerging growth companies.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1833

Mr. REID. On behalf of Senator REED of Rhode Island, Senators LANDRIEU, LEVIN, BROWN of Ohio, and others, I have a substitute amendment which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] for Mr. REED, for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. HARKIN, proposes an amendment numbered 1833.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. REID. On that amendment, Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1834 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1833

Mr. REID. I have a first-degree perfecting amendment which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 1834 to amendment No. 1833.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following new section:  
SEC. \_\_\_\_.

This Act shall become effective 7 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1835 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1834

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 1835 to amendment No. 1834.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "7 days" and insert "6 days".

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion on the substitute amendment which has already been submitted at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the substitute amendment No. 1833 to H.R. 3606, an Act to increase American job creation and economic growth by improving access to the public capital markets for emerging growth companies.

Harry Reid, Mary L. Landrieu, Ben Nelson, Carl Levin, Jon Tester, Mark Begich, Patty Murray, Mark R. Warner, Christopher A. Coons, Robert Menendez, Thomas R. Carper, Joseph I. Lieberman, Debbie Stabenow, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeanne Shaheen, Tom Udall, Jim Webb, Barbara Boxer.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 1836 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1833

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator CANTWELL, for herself and Senator JOHNSON of South Dakota, Senator GRAHAM, Senator SHELBY, and others, I have an amendment at the desk to the language proposed to be stricken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID], for Ms. CANTWELL, for herself and Mr. JOHNSON

of South Dakota, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. AKAKA, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KERRY and Mr. KIRK, proposes an amendment (No. 1836) to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1833.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1837 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1836

Mr. REID. I have a second-degree amendment that is also at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 1837 to amendment No. 1836.

The amendment is as follows:

At the end, add the following new section: SEC. \_\_\_\_.

This title shall become effective 5 days after enactment.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion with respect to the Reid for Cantwell, Johnson of South Dakota, Graham, Shelby amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the cloture motion which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on amendment No. 1836 to H.R. 3606, an Act to increase American job creation and economic growth by improving access to the public capital markets for emerging growth companies.

Harry Reid, Ben Nelson, Mary L. Landrieu, Carl Levin, Jon Tester, Mark Begich, Patty Murray, Mark R. Warner, Christopher A. Coons, Robert Menendez, Thomas R. Carper, Joseph I. Lieberman, Debbie Stabenow, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jeanne Shaheen, Tom Udall, Jim Webb, Barbara Boxer.

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1838

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a motion to commit the bill with instructions which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] moves to commit the bill (H.R. 3606) to the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment (No. 1838).

The amendment is as follows:

SEC. \_\_\_\_.

This Act shall become effective 3 days after enactment.

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1839

Mr. REID. I have an amendment to my instructions at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 1839 to the instructions (amendment No. 1838) to the Motion to Commit H.R. 3606.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "3 days" and insert "2 days".

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays on that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1840 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1839

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] proposes an amendment numbered 1840 to amendment No. 1839.

The amendment is as follows:

In the amendment, strike "2 days" and insert "1 day".

#### CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion on the bill, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the cloture motion which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 3606, an Act to increase American job creation and economic growth by improving access to the public capital markets for emerging growth companies.

Harry Reid, Ben Nelson, Jon Tester, Charles E. Schumer, Joe Manchin III, Patty Murray, Mark R. Warner, Christopher A. Coons, Robert Menendez, Thomas R. Carper, Joseph I. Lieberman, Debbie Stabenow, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tom Udall, Jim Webb, Barbara Boxer.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived for the cloture motions just filed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me take a moment to review what has transpired this morning.

Last week the House passed the pending small business capital formation bill by a vote of 390 to 23. President Obama has endorsed the bill very publicly; thus, this is a measure the Senate should consider expeditiously and pass in short order.

The Republican leader and I have had preliminary conversations about how to process this bill. Initial indications are that the Senate would not be able to agree to a time agreement providing for a limited number of amendments; so I proceeded today to ensure consideration of at least two amendments. So, on Tuesday, the Senate will vote first on the motion to invoke cloture on the Reed of Rhode Island amendment. That amendment is sponsored also by LANDRIEU, LEVIN, and BROWN of Ohio, which is a substitute, as I have indicated.

After disposition of that amendment, the Senate will next vote on a motion to invoke cloture on the bipartisan Cantwell, Johnson, Graham, Shelby Export-Import amendment. This Ex-IM Bank amendment is very important. The legislation just last year created 300,000 jobs and affected 2,000 communities in America. These jobs I am talking about are all American jobs.

After disposition of that amendment, the Senate would then vote on a motion to invoke cloture on the underlying bill. In the meantime, I am always open to unanimous consent agreements to aid in disposition of the bill. So I look forward—if there are things I can help with, I will be happy to do this.

I will say this. I spoke before my presentation here today to my friend from Colorado Senator UDALL. I have worked with him not for days, not weeks, not months but years on an issue that is extremely important to our country; that is, an issue to help credit unions, which have been so important to our country over the years.

During this economic meltdown we have had around the country, in Nevada credit unions have been a lifeblood for small businesses and individuals. We have tried and worked to get this matter on the floor. There is always some reason for not doing it. I understand the anxiousness of my friend from Colorado to have it on this bill. I will be happy to see if there is a way of doing this by consent, but there is no other way of doing it except by consent because it is not germane to the bill before us.

As I told him, I am starting today, on my own, to begin the procedural efforts to have this brought before the Senate. I think we have waited long enough. There is never a good time. There is always some reason of somebody that we have to do this now. This is a bill that presents problems for people because a number of the banks don't want this to happen. But I do, and I am going to do everything I can to have this brought before the Senate.

I will be happy to yield to my friend from Colorado. If he has any questions of me, I will be happy to respond to those or, if he has anything I can respond to in the way of any consent agreement that he wants or whatever, I am here at his disposal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I would like to acknowledge the majority leader and the great work he has put forth on this important opportunity we have. I know the majority leader has some additional comments he would like to make. But I intend to stay after the majority leader concludes and make my case, once again, for why this is so important.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, through the Chair to my friend from Colorado, he has talked about the work I have done. I haven't done much. He has been the leader, and I have been with him all the way. This is truly his issue. He is right. I have supported him from the very beginning, and I admire his resilience. Each time he brings this up, he is pushed back for some other reason. Personally, as I told him today, it is to the point now where we are going to have a vote on this.

There will be people coming to me. Why are you doing this? We are going to have a vote on this. Democrats and Republicans are going to have to make a decision where they stand for American credit unions.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, if I might, I am going to expound on what the majority leader just shared with the body.

The whole point of what we are going to do on the JOBS Act is to expand access to capital for businesses across our great country. But the legislation I have introduced on a bipartisan basis that also has a bipartisan twin in the House of Representatives is aimed at truly small businesses. I would like to explain a little bit more about what I mean.

What we would do is, in effect, lift a regulation. We have talked about deregulation in Washington, unleashing the creativity in our business sector. What this legislation would do is deregulate an industry that is raring to go to help small businesses.

Before I get into the specifics, I would like to thank my Republican cosponsors, who include Senators OLYMPIA SNOWE, RAND PAUL, and SUSAN COLLINS. The legislation in the House has been introduced by Republican ED ROYCE, with whom I served when I was a Member of the House, and he has over 40 Republican cosponsors in the effort on the other side of the Capitol.

In sum, this is a bipartisan, common-sense way to create jobs and help our small businesses without costing taxpayers a dime. When we add the elements in what we are trying to do, there are positives across the board.

The reason this is so important is that there continues to be a phenomenon in our country where small businesses are starving for credit, but the Federal Government is standing in the way of them procuring that credit. As I said to start my remarks, I am talking about the smallest of small businesses. These are the men and women who need \$50,000, \$100,000, maybe even \$200,000 to move from their garage to a retail storefront, to ren-

ovate their sales floor or to upgrade or purchase equipment and, in the process, they will expand. Too often, frankly, they are too small to be worth the time of banks or they don't fit the lending guidelines of the bank's corporate headquarters. But credit unions are standing ready to lend money to these Americans to support their businesses and create jobs.

The leader just moved to the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act; the acronym is the JOBS Act. That is appropriate. The House passed it last week. This bill is aimed at increasing the availability of startup companies by expanding and easing the process of undergoing an IPO. That is an acronym for initial public offering. That is a noble goal, especially as our economy still struggles to create jobs. But the problem is we are still leaving small businesses behind. Why is that? The JOBS Act is aimed at companies with revenue under \$1 billion. Let me repeat that: \$1 billion, with a B. These companies may well need help with an IPO, but I am talking about offering relief to Main Street.

In light of this, I am still committed—and I appreciate the majority leader's comments. I have been very persistent. I am still committed to allowing credit unions to increase the amount of money they can lend to small businesses and our bipartisan Small Business Lending Enhancement Act was the first amendment filed to this bill and I still hold hope that we will find a way to include it in the bill. We ought to pass it immediately. We would see immediate results if we did so.

Let me share a couple examples of why I think this is so important, and they are Colorado centric. I know the Presiding Officer makes a point to talk about his home State on an ongoing basis and to highlight Ohioans who make a difference. So let me talk about two small business owners in Colorado who made a difference with the help of credit unions.

Stacy Hamon owns the 1st Street Salon in Thornton, and Lisa Herman of Broomfield owns Happy Cakes Bake-shop in Denver's Highland Square. They were turned away from their banks. In the breach, credit unions arrived and they lent to these two small businesswomen and they were able to grow their businesses and hire their fellow Coloradans to help them in those business enterprises. They didn't need a billion-dollar IPO. They needed a small bridge loan. We could be making a huge difference in many communities with mere pennies on the dollar of what the JOBS Act is focused on. If my amendment were to be considered in this JOBS Act, it would actually help small businesses directly create jobs.

Credit unions, simply put, specialize in these small business loans to small business. In fact, the Federal Reserve has told us that many banks have quit considering loans such as those under

\$200,000 because they aren't worth the bank's time. Credit unions know these small business owners, and they have money to lend to them. Unfortunately, Federal law still limits the amount of small business loans a credit union can extend to these businesses to 12 percent of their assets. Over 500 credit unions nationally have had to stop or slow down their business lending because of this—I can't think of any other word but "strange"—strange Federal limit on helping small businesses. It is hard to believe. Government is telling these financial institutions they can't help create jobs in their local communities, and that is why my bipartisan amendment would double the amount of money credit unions can offer to small businesses.

We have heard from the banks over the years they think it is unfair they have to compete with credit unions. But the fact is, it is not about banks or credit unions; it is about small businesses. I have to say these two different kinds of financial institutions serve very different small business populations. Credit unions serve the smallest of small businesses that often must resort to their credit cards, literally, to invest in their businesses and keep their cash flow going, but in the process they create jobs. These are business owners who have been, by and large, turned away by the banks. I am not talking about taking business away from anyone. I am suggesting, at the very least, we let the credit unions loan to these small business owners whom the banks don't want to do business with because they are too small.

Credit unions have been in existence for over 100 years, and today they only represent about 5 percent to 6 percent of all small business loans. Even if they were to increase their lending, if credit union lending were to increase and their market share were to double as a result, they would still only have 7 to 9 percent of market share, and banks would have nearly 90 percent of the markets for themselves.

Let me rebut another concern that has been expressed. The banks say this proposal is unproven or somehow an unsound way of increasing small business loans, but as I have said, the credit unions have been making small business loans since the early 1900s. There were not any limits on how much credit unions could lend until 1998. The credit union sector has a regulator, the National Credit Union Administration, and it has endorsed lifting or even eliminating the small business lending cap. It just makes sense to do this, and I cannot believe we are going to let these squabbles between the banks and credit unions keep job creators from going to work in the small small business sector.

There is a rush to pass the JOBS Act, which would help billion-dollar companies with their IPOs. But how about we take a little bit of time to help small business owners, such as Stacy and Lisa, by passing our bipartisan amendment? After all, if we are going to tell

the American people this bill is about increasing access to capital, let's start by helping the small business owners on Main Street that fuel our job engine. This is what we would do in Colorado. It is how we would apply our commonsense approach to business.

I plead with my colleagues to consider the important effect this would have. So, in summary, our bipartisan amendment is projobs, it is deregulatory, and it would not cost the taxpayers a dime. It would release \$10 billion in capital across our country and, conservatively, 100,000 new jobs would be a result.

Let's take this up. Let's fuel the economic engine with the capital of our small business sector.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak until noon in a colloquy with the distinguished majority whip. Senator AYOTTE and a number of other Senators will join us during the next 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SYRIA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know Senator DURBIN, Senator AYOTTE, and others will be coming to the Senate floor, but let me get it started. According to the United Nations, more than 8,000 Syrians have been murdered in attacks by the desperate regime of President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

We continue to receive press reports on a daily basis about Asad's forces summarily executing, imprisoning, and torturing demonstrators who want nothing more than what we take for granted, which is to live in freedom in a democracy. This week we learned that dozens of Syrian women and children—some infants as young as 4 months old—were stabbed, shot, and burned by government forces in Homs. I know it is difficult for most of us to comprehend—and most of us would be so repulsed by it, we would not want to comprehend the kind of brutality Asad is perpetrating against his own people. Yet in the face of these atrocities, Russia continues to prop up the Asad regime by providing arms that are being used to slaughter these innocent Syrian civilians.

Russia is the top supplier of weapons to Syria and reportedly sold Syria up to \$1 billion or more worth of arms just last year. Western and Arab governments have pleaded with Russia to stop supplying these weapons to the Asad regime, but it has refused so far.

Russia is not just passively supplying weapons to the Asad regime, it has recently admitted to having military weapons instructors on the ground in Syria training Asad's Army on how to use these weapons. Russian weapons, including high-explosive mortars, have been found at the site of atrocities in Homs.

This picture taken by Al Arabiya and Reuters reads:

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, why don't you visit Homs to see your weapons and their effectiveness in the bodies of our children!

The Syrian people recognize Russia's role in their current misery, as reflected by this picture and by this statement to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Rosoboronexport is Russia's official arms dealer. This company handles about 80 percent of Russia's weapons exports, according to its Web site, and it is spearheading Russia's continuing effort to arm the Asad regime, which, in my mind, makes them an accessory to mass murder.

I see the distinguished majority whip has come to the floor, and I want to give him a chance to make any appropriate remarks he cares to make and engage in a colloquy with him.

First, let me close my comments on this concern I have. Not only is Russia selling arms to Syria to kill innocent civilians, but you can imagine my shock and dismay when I found out that our own Department of Defense has a no-bid contract with this same Russian arms merchant that is helping arm the Asad regime.

This is a no-bid contract to provide approximately 21 dual-use Mi-17 helicopters for the Afghan military. As I said, this is a no-bid Army contract that was awarded last summer that is reportedly worth as much as \$900 million. So the only thing I can conclude is that the U.S. taxpayer is providing money to a Russian arms dealer to purchase Russian helicopters for the Afghan military, and the very same arms merchant is arming President Asad's regime and killing innocent Syrians.

I, along with 16 of my colleagues, have sent a letter to Secretary Panetta expressing our alarm and concern over these arrangements, asking for further information and urging them to reconsider this contract with Rosoboronexport.

I want to stop on this point: We must keep the pressure on the Department of Defense to reconsider this contract and on the Russians to cease all arms sales to the Asad regime.

I am hopeful that the upcoming debate on the repeal of Jackson-Vanik will provide an opportunity for the Senate to further examine these serious issues.

Again, let me state my appreciation to Senator DURBIN, the distinguished majority whip, for his participation in expressing alarm and concern over these circumstances and ask him to make any comments he cares to make.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my honor to join my colleague and friend, the Senator from Texas. We are on opposite sides of the aisle, but we are on the same side of this issue.

Listen to what America has said about what is happening in Syria: Almost 8,000 innocent people have been

killed in the streets of Syria by Bashar Asad, the dictator. The people who expressed their concern and objection to his policies are mowed down and killed in the streets, their homes are bombed, and nothing is being done. Sadly, the United States tried to engage the United Nations Security Council to join the Arab League and others condemning what Asad is doing to these innocent people. Our efforts were stopped by China and Russia.

The relationship between Russia and Syria is well documented. They have been close allies for many years. We also know they are providing about \$1 billion in Russian military aid to the Syrian dictator to kill his own people in the streets. That is part of this.

I have to join Senator CORNYN in saying how concerned we were when we learned that one of the leading military exporters of Russia, Rosoboronexport, is not only doing business in Syria but with the U.S. Government. Now, I understand the history. We are buying Russian helicopters to help the Afghans defend their country against the Taliban. The helicopter of choice in Afghanistan today is, I believe, the old Soviet M-17 or M-18 helicopter. So our government is buying these Russian helicopters to give to the Afghan Government to fight the Taliban.

We are, in fact, doing business with the very same company and country that is subsidizing the massacre in Syria. It is right for us, as Members of Congress, to make that point to Secretary Panetta and the Department of Defense. I think it is also appropriate for us to ask why we are not converting the Afghan defense forces, their security forces, to another helicopter.

Can I be so bold as to suggest it be made in the United States of America since we are paying for it? Why aren't we doing that? Why aren't we creating jobs in America and training these Afghans on helicopters that come from our country, that are as good or better than anything the Soviets ever put in the air? I don't have a preference on an American helicopter. I don't have any producers in my State, so I am not into that particular bidding war. I would not get into it. But I do believe sending a word to the Russians immediately that our relationship of buying these helicopters for Afghanistan and subsidizing their military sales to Syria should come to an end. That is what this letter is about.

We cannot pass resolutions on the Senate floor condemning the bloodshed in Syria and ignore the obvious connection: Russian military is moving arms into Syria that are used to kill innocent people.

I noticed the Senator from Texas brought a photograph with him. This photograph I am going to show is one of a Russian warship, an aircraft carrier, docked at the Syrian port of Tartus on January 8 of this year. What we could not turn into a poster is the video clip showing the Russian warship